DOCTOR STRANGE
MARVEL
#18
AARON BACHALO

STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the ANCIENT ONE who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doctor Strange's friend and assistant WONG has been assimilated by Mr. Misery (a monster made up of Doctor Strange's own pain and suffering), and the Sorcerer Supreme can't find either of them.

But Mr. Misery has now made a move in the form of a group of horribly tumorous victims. These victims were all treated and operated on by Doctor Strange back in his surgeon days. When a non-magical doctor tried to help one patient, the tumors (made out of the same substance as Misery) slaughtered everyone in the room.

Now Doctor Strange must find a way to re-save these people. Luckily, he doesn't have to do it alone--THE MIGHTY THOR has come to his aid!

THE WORLD'S FINEST SUPER-SURGEONS

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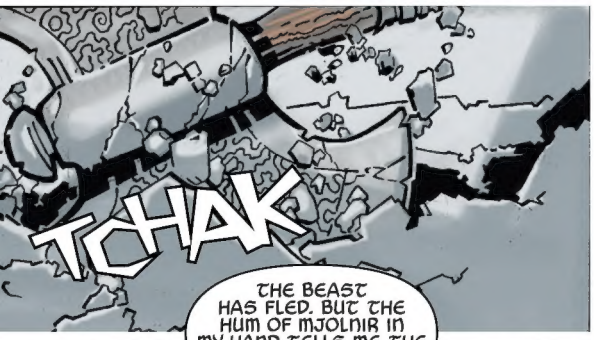
NYU MEDICAL CENTER.
PLEASE KEEP MOVING IN AN ORDERLY FASHION! WE HAVE TO GET EVERYONE CLEAR OF THE BUILDING!
THE HOSPITAL MUST BE EVACUATED AT ONCE! ALL PATIENTS ARE BEING MOVED TO NEIGHBORING MEDICAL FACILITIES!
WHAT'S HAPPENING, DOC? IS IT A FIRE?
"A FIRE." THAT SOUNDS SO QUAINT RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
JUST GET EVERYONE AWAY FROM THE BUILDING. WE HAVE PROFESSIONALS ON-SITE WHO ARE EQUIPPED TO HANDLE EMERGENCIES JUST LIKE...
DOCTOR.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH USE FOR DOCTORS ANYMORE.
HMMMRPH.

I WOULDN'T BE SO SURE OF THAT.
YOU'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE DOCTOR WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.
KRKK
THAK
HHRGH!
AND IF YOU WON'T ANSWER TO ME, WELL...
KRA-KROOM

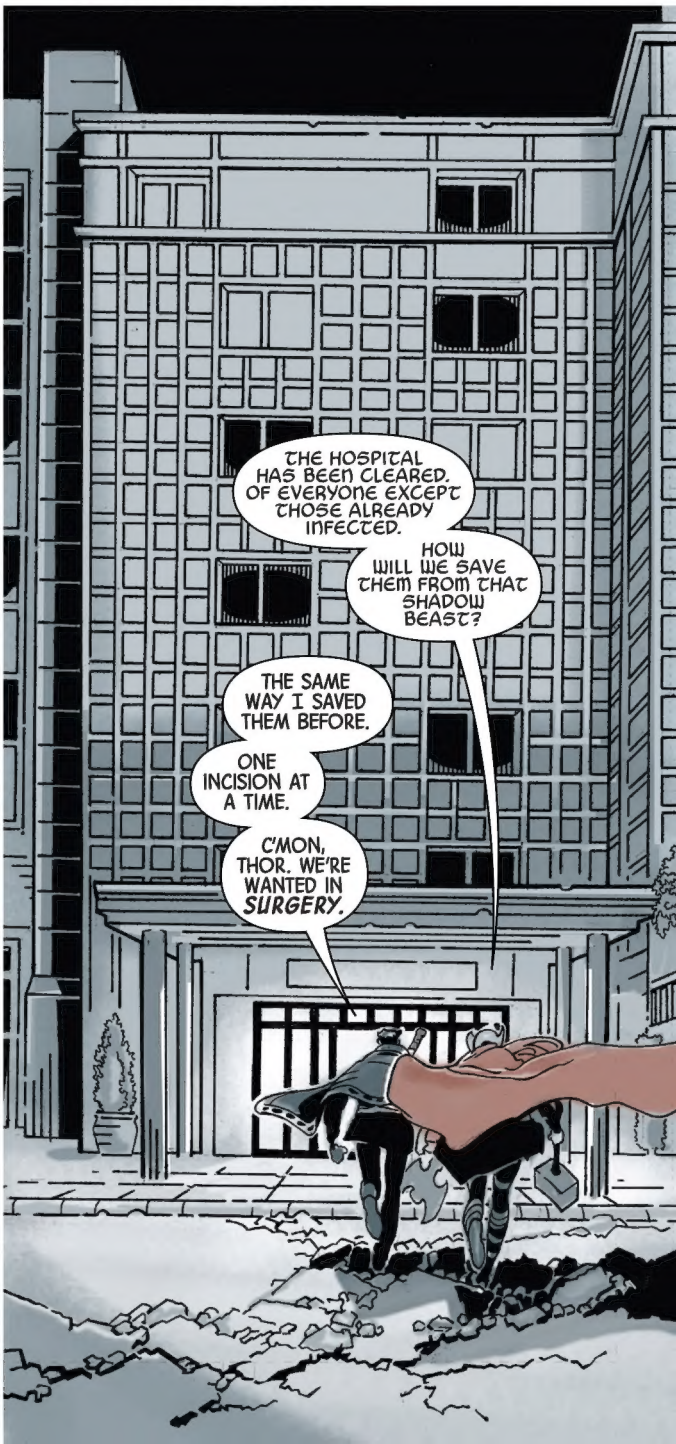
...I SUPPOSE YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO *HIGHER POWERS.*
AND HEY, LOOK, I JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE BROUGHT SOME WITH ME.
WHAT FOUL VILLAINY IS THIS? A MONSTER OF LIVING DARKNESS THAT PREYS ON THE INJURED AND INFIRM?
THE GODDESS OF THUNDER SAYS THEE NAY!
AND THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS SAYS...*DITTO*, I GUESS?
MAGICAL NOTE TO SELF--WORK ON BATTLE CRY.
YOUR MOVE, MR. MISERY.

YOU'RE STALLING, STEPHEN.
THIS IS NOT THE FIGHT, AND YOU KNOW IT.
YOU'RE STALLING BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WIN. BUT BY ALL MEANS, DO GO AHEAD AND TRY.

I'LL BE WATCHING.
WHERE'S *WONG*, YOU BASTARD? WHERE'S...

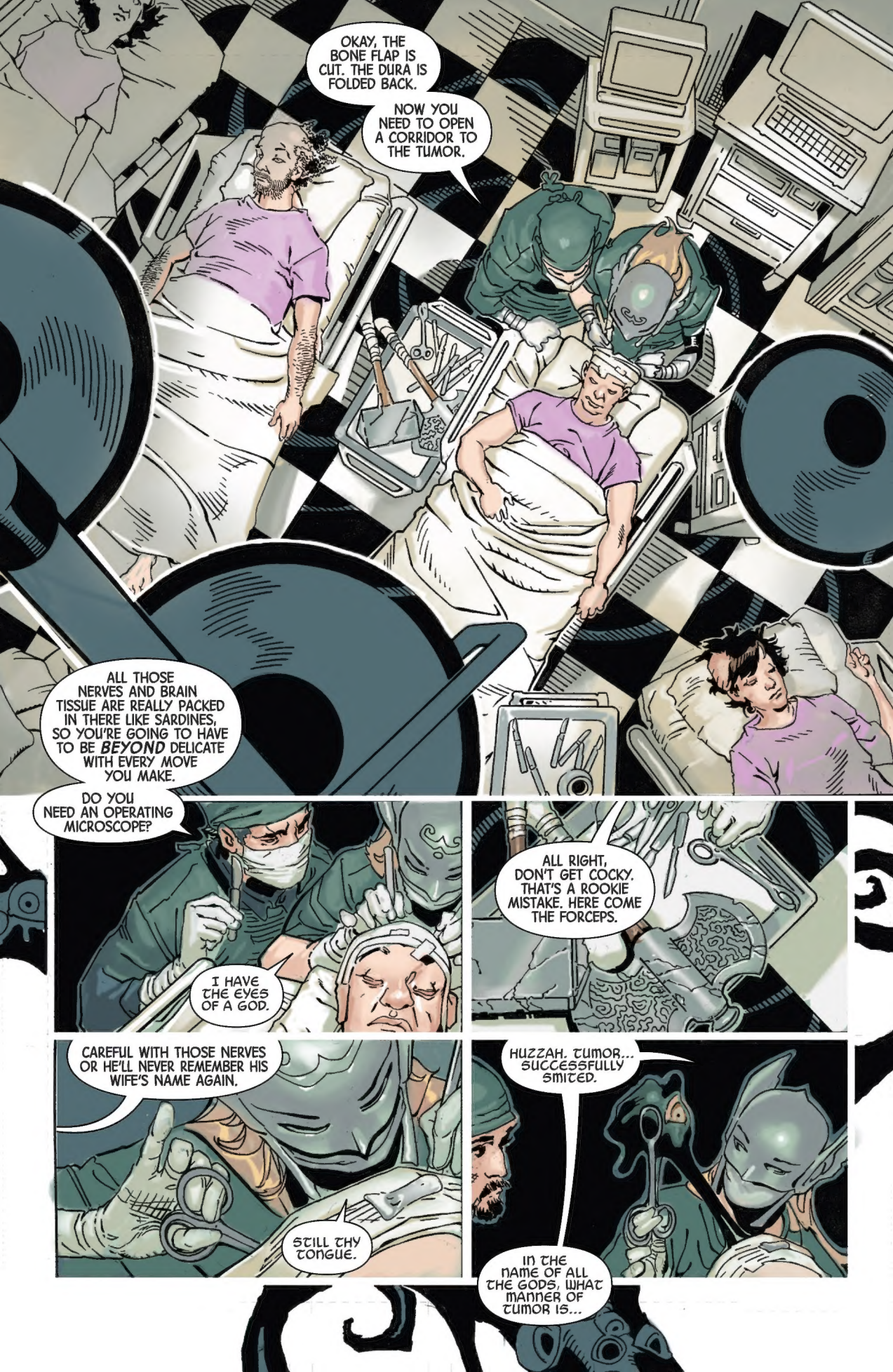

TCHAK

THE BEAST HAS FLED. BUT THE HUM OF MJOLNIR IN MY HAND TELLS ME THE DANGER HAS NOT YET PASSED.
NOT IN THE LEAST.


THE HOSPITAL HAS BEEN CLEARED. OF EVERYONE EXCEPT THOSE ALREADY INFECTED.
HOW WILL WE SAVE THEM FROM THAT SHADOW BEAST?
THE SAME WAY I SAVED THEM BEFORE.
ONE INCISION AT A TIME.
C'MON, THOR. WE'RE WANTED IN *SURGERY*.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR THINKING, DOCTOR STRANGE. WE MUST INDEED BE SURGICAL IN OUR STRIKES IF WE ARE TO DEFEAT A BEAST OF LIVING DARKNESS SUCH AS THIS MISERY.
I WASN'T SPEAKING IN METAPHORS, THOR. THIS ISN'T A FIGHT WE CAN WIN WITH HAMMERS AND AXES. IF WE'RE GOING TO SAVE THESE PEOPLE...
...WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT AS SURGEONS.
THEY'RE ALL MY FORMER PATIENTS. ONES I OPERATED ON IN THE DAYS WHEN I WAS A MERE MILD-MANNERED WORLD-RENOWNED NEUROSURGEON.
MISERY HAS REGROWN TUMORS IN THEIR BRAINS. SO THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THEM IS TO CUT THEM OPEN ALL OVER AGAIN.
AND YOU WISH ME TO ASSIST YOU SOMEHOW IN THESE SURGICAL PROCEDURES?
NO.
I'LL BE ASSISTING YOU...
...DR. FOSTER.

AH. PERHAPS YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH ONE OF THE OTHER THORS. I AM NOT...
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY COY HERE, JANE. I SEE THROUGH MAGIC SPELLS. IT'S WHAT I DO.
I KNOW YOU'RE JANE FOSTER UNDERNEATH THAT HELMET. I'VE KNOWN SINCE THE FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU.
I NEVER TOLD ANYONE. I MINDED MY OWN DAMN MORTAL BUSINESS.
BUT NOW I NEED THE HELP OF A SUPER HERO SURGEON. THESE PEOPLE NEED YOUR HELP.
SO TELL ME, DOCTOR, IS YOUR SECRET MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR LIVES?
...
OF COURSE NOT.
WHAT IS IT YOU NEED JANE FOSTER TO DO?
YOU HAVE ACCESS TO ALL OF JANE FOSTER'S MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE WHEN YOU'RE IN THIS FORM?
AYE.
HAVE YOU EVER PERFORMED BRAIN SURGERY?
NAY. NOT UNLESS ADMINISTERING CONCUSSIONS VIA HAMMER COUNTS.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO HOLD A SCALPEL FOR MANY YEARS, BUT I CAN BE YOUR EYES. I CAN WALK YOU THROUGH IT.
SCRUB IN, DR. THOR, AND LET'S GET TO CUTTING.


OKAY, THE BONE FLAP IS CUT. THE DURA IS FOLDED BACK.
NOW YOU NEED TO OPEN A CORRIDOR TO THE TUMOR.
ALL THOSE NERVES AND BRAIN TISSUE ARE REALLY PACKED IN THERE LIKE SARDINES, SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE BEYOND DELICATE WITH EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE.
DO YOU NEED AN OPERATING MICROSCOPE?
I HAVE THE EYES OF A GOD.
ALL RIGHT, DON'T GET COCKY. THAT'S A ROOKIE MISTAKE. HERE COME THE FORCEPS.
CAREFUL WITH THOSE NERVES OR HE'LL NEVER REMEMBER HIS WIFE'S NAME AGAIN.
STILL THY TONGUE.
HUZZAH. TUMOR... SUCCESSFULLY SMITED.
IN THE NAME OF ALL THE GODS, WHAT MANNER OF TUMOR IS...

ODIN'S BEARD!
IT APPEARS...THE TUMOR OBJECTS TO BEING REMOVED.
IT'S OKAY. JUST LET IT GO.
IT'S NOT TRYING TO ATTACK YOU. IT'S TRYING TO GET AWAY--
--FROM ME.
BUT THAT'S NOT HAPPENING. NOT EVER AGAIN.
YOU ARE...EATING A BRAIN TUMOR, DOCTOR STRANGE.
IT'S MADE OF MY OWN PAIN AND SUFFERING. I'M REABSORBING IT.
TELL ME, ARE ALL OF YOUR TEAM-UPS THIS BIZARRE AND REVOLTING?
PRETTY MUCH.
C'MON, CUT ME OUT ANOTHER ONE, THOR. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

URK!
GKH!
GAH!
AHH!
THEY'RE SEIZING. ALL OF THEM.
MISERY'S WATCHING. HE KNOWS WHAT WE'RE UP TO.
AND HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT EASY FOR US.
THEY'RE ALL DYING. WE'LL HAVE TO CHOOSE. WE'LL OPEN UP THE WEAKEST ONE FIRST.
NO.
WE OPERATE ON ALL OF THEM. ALL AT ONCE.
WHAT? CAN YOU ACTUALLY DO THAT?
I AM THOR. THE GODDESS OF THUNDER.
WHICH MEANS I KNOW HOW TO MOVE LIKE LIGHTNING.
STAND ASIDE, DOCTOR STRANGE. AND COVER THY EARS.

THOR!
YOU'RE MOVING SO FAST, I CAN'T EVEN SEE YOU! I CAN'T WALK YOU THROUGH IT IF I CAN'T EVEN...
THOR!
WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, IT MUST BE WORKING. BECAUSE MISERY SURE ISN'T HAPPY.
C'MON, YOU BASTARD. I'VE GOT ROOM IN MY BELLY FOR ALL OF YOU. LET'S GET THIS...
ARE YOU GOING TO EAT ME TOO, DOCTOR?
OH, NO.

BECAUSE YOU'RE CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO SAVE ME.
WONG, YOU HAVE TO FIGHT THIS. YOU'RE *STRONGER* THAN MISERY. YOU CAN...
THERE IS NOTHING TO FIGHT. WE ARE ONE AND THE SAME NOW.
NO. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT. WE CAN SAVE YOU. JUST LIKE WE'RE SAVING THESE PEOPLE HERE.
THERE IT IS. *THERE'S* THE ARROGANT DOCTOR I KNOW.
YOU'RE NOT SAVING ANYONE, STEPHEN. NOT EVEN YOURSELF.
AND MISERY IS NOT A TUMOR TO BE REMOVED FROM ME.
I *AM* MISERY NOW.
DON'T... DON'T SAY THAT...
IF YOU WANT TO STOP ME, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DO IT...
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL ME, DOCTOR STRANGE.
GUUGHK.
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL YOUR *BEST FRIEND.*

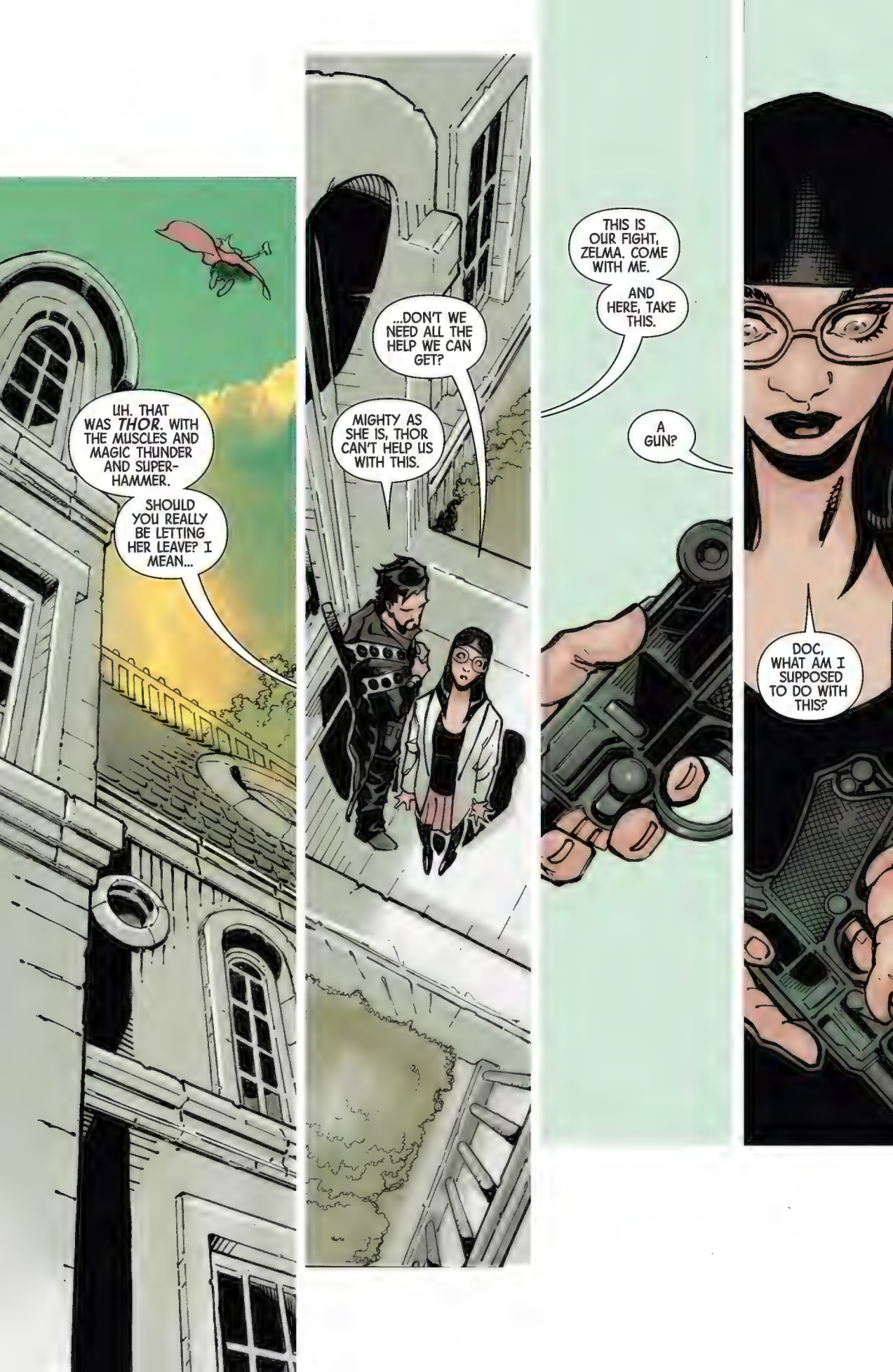
OPERATING SO FAST I'M MELTING THE SCALPELS. DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I COULD MOVE AT THESE SPEEDS...
...LET ALONE PERFORM BRAIN SURGERY.
BUT CAN'T STOP NOW. ALMOST GOT...
...THE LAST...
...OF THESE ODIN-DAMNED...
...TUMORS.
THANK THE NORNS. NOW TO CLOSE UP THE PATIENTS AND BE...
GAGGH!

DO IT, DOCTOR. KILL ME.
TAKE YOUR AX AND CLEAVE WONG'S SKULL.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THIS, TO SAVE THESE PATIENTS.
I... WON'T.
YOU'RE THEIR DOCTOR. YOU HAVE TO.
I CAN'T.
THEN EVERYONE DIES.
I AM NOT... GOING TO EAT THESE TUMORS. I'VE ALREADY GOT ENOUGH CANCER INSIDE ME AS IT IS.
BUT I'M ALL OUT OF SCALPELS.
GUESS I'D BETTER SWITCH TO SOMETHING ELSE.
THAK

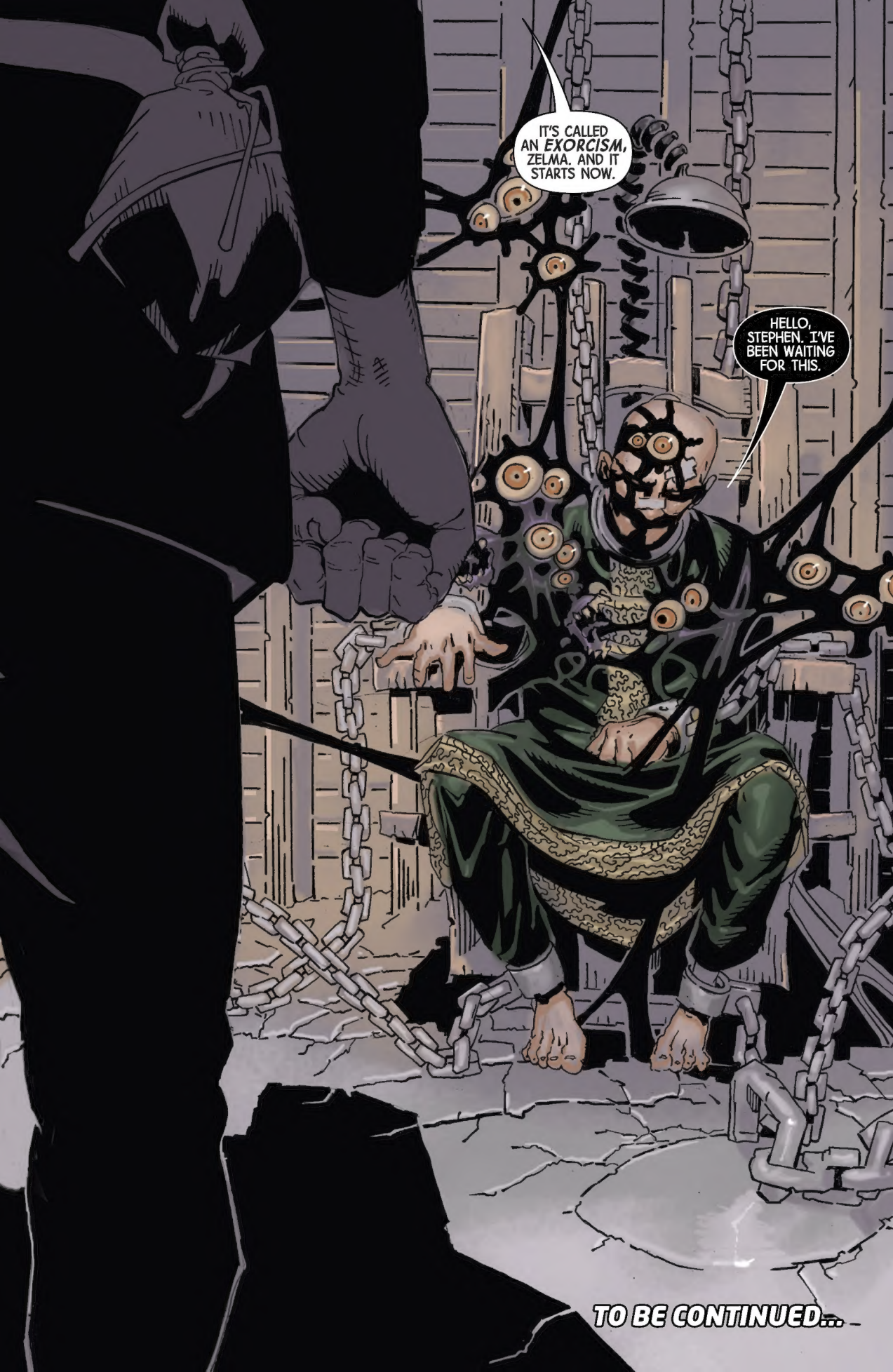
WONG... PLEASE...
YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER, DOCTOR. YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SUFFERED BEFORE. AND THE BEST PART IS...
...YOU KNOW YOU DESERVE IT.
GARRRGH!
DRADDA-DOOOOM

YOU'RE RIGHT, MISERY. I DO DESERVE IT.
BUT WONG DOESN'T.
I'M SORRY, BROTHER.
KTHWAK

THE PATIENTS ARE ALL IN STABLE CONDITION. AND IN CAPABLE HANDS.
AND YOUR ENEMY HAS BEEN VANQUISHED. IT WOULD APPEAR THIS HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL TEAM-UP, DOCTOR STRANGE.
WEIRD AND SOMEWHAT REVOLTING, BUT SUCCESSFUL NONETHELESS. DO YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE?
PLEASE SAY NAY.
YES.
HELP ME GET HIM HOME.


UH. THAT WAS *THOR*. WITH THE MUSCLES AND MAGIC THUNDER AND SUPER-HAMMER.
SHOULD YOU REALLY BE LETTING HER LEAVE? I MEAN...
...DON'T WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET?
MIGHTY AS SHE IS, THOR CAN'T HELP US WITH THIS.
THIS IS OUR FIGHT, ZELMA. COME WITH ME.
AND HERE, TAKE THIS.
A GUN?
DOC, WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS?

IF MY EYES TURN BLACK AND TENTACLES START COMING OUT OF MY MOUTH...
...I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO SHOOT ME IN THE HEAD.
I CAN'T... ARE YOU SERIOUS?
THE HEAD. OR THE FACE. AS MANY TIMES AT IT TAKES TO MAKE SURE I'M DEAD.
THEN SET THE SELF-DESTRUCT TIMER ON THE SANCTUM AND RUN FOR THE DOOR.
SELF-DESTRUCT? YOUR HOUSE HAS A SELF-DESTRUCT? WHY WOULD I...
DOC, WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN HERE? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO TO WONG?
HE'S NOT WONG. NOT RIGHT NOW.
BUT I'M GOING TO FIGHT TO SAVE HIM. EVEN IF IT KILLS ME.


IT'S CALLED AN *EXORCISM*, ZELMA. AND IT STARTS NOW.
HELLO, STEPHEN. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE: WHAT'S UP, DOC?

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